

OUTGOING MESSAGE

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ROUTING

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ITER NO: NH-5

DATE: 24 FEB 74

SUBJECT: GISCARD D'ESTAING REPORTEDLY WILL SOON BE NAMED
PRIME MINISTER

25X1

THE BROTHER OF GISCARD D'ESTAING, THE FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER, RECENTLY TOLD A US EMBASSY OFFICER IN BRUSSELS THAT HE IS CERTAIN HIS BROTHER WILL REPLACE PRIME MINISTER MESSMER WHO HAS BEEN SEVERELY CRITICIZED FOR A LACK OF DYNAMISM AND THAT PRESIDENT POMPIDOU IS IN "THE LAST PHASE" OF HIS ILLNESS. HE ADDED THAT HIS BROTHER IS ALSO BEING CROONED FOR THE PRESIDENCY AFTER POMPIDOU RESIGNS.

4 GISCARD, WHO HEADS THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS--THE GAULLISTS' 5 JUNIOR COALITION PARTNER--HAS BEENED TO BE POMPIDOU'S FAVORITE 2 POTENTIAL SUCCESSOR. THE ORTHODOX GAULLISTS, HOWEVER, OPPOSE HIM, 1 AND HE IS ADDITIONALLY HARPERED BY HIS ALOOF, ARISTOCRATIC MANNER.

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State Department review completed

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Giscard's party actually stands to the right of the Gaullists. The Gaullists prefer one of their own, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, as the coalition candidate in a presidential race. Pompidou opposes him.

Should Giscard be named prime minister, the choice could indicate that Pompidou intends to defy the orthodox Gaullists. Should Giscard become the coalition candidate in a presidential race, he would present the electorate with a clear-cut choice between the right and the left, led by socialist chief Francois Mitterrand. Chaban, on the other hand, would have wide support from the right and center, and possible even from right-wing socialists who are uneasy in their alliance with the communists.

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